Mid-Hudson Library System | Minutes of the 67th Annual Membership Meeting

Friday, October 23, 2026 | The Wallace Center of the FDR Presidential Library & Museum, Hyde Park, NY

President Stuart Auchincloss called the meeting to order at 9:13am.

1. IN ATTENDANCE:
    a. Trustees: Stuart Auchincloss, Peter Carey, Mary De Bellis, Kevin Finnegan, Leslie Gerber, Charles Kutcher, David Lavallee, Jill Leinung, Jenny Post, Janet Schnitzer, Barbara Swanson, Carla Taylor, Mark Williams
    b. Staff: Nina Acosta, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, John Barath, Kathryn Brew, James Coyle, Laura Crisci, Kerstin Cruger, Gerry Formby, Chris Herron, Dave Haspel, Sarah Kittle, Laurie Shedrick, BJ Vickery
    c. Others Present (list attached to file)

2. ELECTION OF MHLS BOARD MEMBERS: Janet Schnitzer, Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee conducted the election of three trustees to the MHLS Board.

    a. Greene County: Corinne Molinaro was nominated for her first five-year term by Corinne Tatavitto, Director of the Cairo Public Library and seconded by Jacquiline Elmo-Emel, Director of the Mountain Top Library. This nomination was approved at the Greene County Library Association meeting held on September 16, 2026.

    b. Putnam County: Terry Raskyn, Esq. was nominated for her first full five-year term by Donna Perolli, Director of the Kent Public Library, and seconded by Michele Capozzella, Director of the Mahopac Library. This nomination was approved at the Putnam County Library Association meeting held on June 23, 2026.

    c. Ulster County: Donald Carragher was nominated for his first full five-year term by Jesse Chance, Director of the Town of Esopus Library, and seconded by Darren Lanspery, Director of the Plattekill Library. This nomination was approved at the Ulster County Library Association meeting held on July 28, 2026.

    There being only one candidate nominated for each eligible position, Ms. Schnitzer declared the election of Corinne Molinaro for a 5-year term commencing January 1, 2027; Terry Raskyn, Esq. for a 5-year term commencing January 1, 2027; and Donald Carragher for a 5-year term commencing January 1, 2027.

3. REPORT OF THE BOARD PRESIDENT: President Auchincloss' report provided an overview of several board actions taken in 2026 including the approval of a new Plan of Service, joining Readers First, and the submission of a board resolution defending the federal E-Rate program. Auchincloss also noted several awards the organization and its staff won this year, including the Excellence in Community Engagement Award from Central Hudson and Executive Director Aldrich being awarded the St. Francis of Assisi Award of Columbia County and the New York Library Association's Distinguished Service Award.

4. REPORT OF THE BOARD TREASURER: Treasurer Kevin Finnegan provided a report on the fiscal standing of the organization and reported that despite the lack of a meaningful increase in state aid, MHLS will close out its fiscal year with a balanced budget due to an increase in the members' assessment – approved by the Directors Association, careful monitoring of expenses, contract renegotiations, and grants. Finnegan reported on the migration of the financial software used by the organization and noted grants received by the organization, including funding for The Library of Local from The Understory. Finnegan expressed gratitude on behalf of the MHLS Board to the MHLS Directors Association for their investment in the organization.

5. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Executive Director Rebekkah Smith Aldrich provided:
    a. An update on the status of state aid for libraries and shared elements of an advocacy strategy for the upcoming budget year.
    b. A review of System efforts over the course of 2026 including the everyday success of MHLS Staff in supporting member library operations; the finalization of a new 5-year contract with Innovative Interfaces Inc.,/Clarivate; the Patron Data Clean-up Project; Staff Picks Pilot Project; professional development highlights such as the Horizons and Bridgebuilding series; the administration of the State Aid for Library Construction; strategic partnerships with The Understory, regional library systems and Central Hudson; and support for member libraries' disaster preparedness efforts.
    c. Kathryn Brew, ILS and Technology Operations Specialist, was recognized for 5 years of service to the MHLS community; John Barath, Delivery Operations Clerk, was recognized for 15 years of service; Gerry Formby, IT Operations Supervisor, was recognized for 20 years of service; and Kerstin Cruger, Outreach & Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Specialist, was recognized for 25 years of service.
    d. A presentation of "Outstanding Accomplishment" awards to:
        i. Marlboro Free Library for the grand opening of their newly expanded and renovated facility.
        ii. Olive Free Library for the completion of the Sustainable Library Certification Program.
        iii. Rosendale Library for the passage of their building referendum.

6. ADJOURNMENT OF THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: At 10:48am, President Auchincloss adjourned the Business portion of the 67th Annual Membership Meeting.

7. KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Aldrich introduced Jennie Rose Halperin, Executive Director of Library Futures. Halperin discussed the state of licenses for digital collections and eResoruces and advised the audience on key elements of contact/license negotiations and how to best protect their library and their patrons in this environment.

Respectfully submitted by Jill Leinung, Secretary

Approved on [DATE] by the MHLS Board of Trustees